United Nations CEDAW/C/GUY/CO/7-8/Add.1

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.: General
29 March 2016

Original: English

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Concluding observations on the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Guyana

Addendum

Information provided by Guyana in follow-up to the concluding observations*

[Date received: 12 February 2016]

Note: The present document is being circulated in English, French and Spanish only.

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

Please recycle

Response to paragraph 11

1. The Cooperative Republic of Guyana has, through the Constitution (Amendment) Act No. 5 of 2001, incorporated the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women into its domestic law by way of the Fourth Schedule in the Constitution of Guyana.

2. By virtue of this, the Constitution, being the supreme law, enshrines Guyana's commitment to adhere to the articles therein. This is a demonstration of the highest priority given to the Convention.

3. Notwithstanding the contents of article 154 A, Guyana remains committed to ensuring the implementation of the articles of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and continues to do so. Legislation enacted both before and after the enactment of article 154 A demonstrates Guyana's commitment to the implementation of the Convention. Such legislation includes the Domestic Violence Act, the Prevention of Discrimination Act, the Family and Dependants Provision Act. The Combating Trafficking of Persons Act was enacted in 2005, and assiduous efforts are being made to implement its provisions to combat trafficking in persons, particularly women and girls.

4. The application and continued relevance of this article will be revisited.

Response to paragraph 17

Mandate and Responsibilities of the National Machinery

5. The Women's Affair Bureau is a unit under the authority of the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security (now the Ministry of Social Protection), which is the national focal point for gender and development. The Bureau coordinates programmes and projects that promote gender equality in collaboration with governmental, civil society and international organizations. It also provides a forum for consultation and advocacy in general and specifically with the regional women's affairs committees (of Guyana).

6. The Women's Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security (now operating under the Ministry of Social Protection) functions are:

- To contribute to the formulation of a gender awareness policy for the advancement of women in Guyana.
- Provide administrative and technical assistance to non-governmental women's organizations in the planning and implementation of programmes.
- Provide a referral service for women.
- Initiate gender-based research and provide disaggregated data to inform policy and programme formulation.
- Address issues of concerns related to the girl child.
- Maintain a public Education programme which will ensure a clear understanding of issues of concern to women.

7. Much of its work is complementary to that of the Domestic Violence Policy Unit and the Men's Affairs Bureau, established within the Ministry. The latter has been beneficial to the goals of empowerment of women, in creating a safe public space to reach and share directly with men and boys their role in enhancing gender equality. The Men's Affairs Bureau engages men and boys to raise their awareness about gender norms and the consequences of violence against women. Interventions are carried out in schools, prisons and communities throughout the country.

Training — sensitization/awareness:

8. The Canadian International Development Agency has provided in-house training of staff of the Women's and Men's Affairs Bureau during 2012.

9. Seminars on gender mainstreaming, with representatives of civil society organizations and governmental agencies were conducted.

10. Visits were made to several administrative regions such as regions 1, 6, 7, 8 and 10. These visits were to increase awareness on issues of the personal development of women.

11. Trading was conducted in regions 7, 8 and 9 (indigenous communities) on HIV/AIDS, domestic violence and trafficking in persons.

12. Some initial work was done towards the updating of the National Policy on Women which seeks to provide the framework for the promotion of women's human rights and minimization of any kind of discrimination against women.

13. The Inter-Ministry Committee and the regional women's affairs committees were established by the Women's Affairs Bureau to monitor gender mainstreaming and gender equality within government ministries and the regional democratic councils. The Inter-Ministry Committee comprises senior personnel in the public service and offers technical advice to the Bureau and also helps to shape gender-sensitive policies. The regional women's affairs committees comprise representatives of national non-governmental organizations in their respective administrative regions.

Financial resources

14. The direct allocation to the national machinery is approximately less than 1 per cent of the national budget. However, the process of coordination and promotion of gender equality and gender mainstreaming benefited from budgetary allocations to the ministries of health, education, public service, among others.

15. In addition, the Canadian International Development Agency has been one of our most reliable international development partners for funding of activities related to gender and women's rights.

Technical resources

16. For several years, the Women's Affair Bureau has been operating with a small cadre of staff. However, with the amendment to the Constitution in 1999-2001, the Women and Gender Equality Commission was established to support gender equality and the empowerment of women. *The Commission derives its mandate* from article 212 Q of the Constitution which states "to promote national recognition and acceptance that women's rights are human rights, respect for gender equality

and the protection, development and attainment of gender equality." The 15-member Commission, which comprises 14 women and a man, was appointed in 2009. The Women and Gender Equality Commission has committed to capacity development, raising awareness and advocacy on women's rights. The Women and Gender Equality Commission had engagements with the Ministry of Legal Affairs and the Attorney General with a view to ensuring that laws are enforced in relation to the jury system, protection orders (especially the Domestic Violence Act).